

Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services

B

April 15, 1999

Representative John Gard
Senator Brian Burke
Joint Finance Committee
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Members of Joint Finance Committee:

The Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services & School Administrators Alliance strongly recommends that you retain the 63% and 51% special education funding language currently in Wisconsin Statutes. In 1973 when Wisconsin first passed legislation that required the state's school districts to provide education programs to students with disabilities, the funding for teachers, support staff and transportation was at 70% of approved costs. This 1973 Wisconsin legislation was approved 3 years before federal law 94-142 mandated programs across the country. As you are aware, currently the state is reimbursing school districts at 34% or less for approved costs.

WCASS & SAA recommends that you increase the 34% amount for these important programs to at least 50% for approved staff and services. This must be done to stop the pitting of students with disabilities against regular education students and others needs in school districts across Wisconsin. School districts have done everything possible to operate efficient and effective programs for students with disabilities, but costs continue to increase faster than regular education as school districts implement new state and federal laws and enrollments continue to increase.

On a national level, states fund special education programs at an average of 56% where Wisconsin is currently at 34% or less.

WCASS & SAA would also recommend that along with increased funding that modifications be made in revenue caps for costs of special education programs caused by increased enrollments, high cost students and the shortfall in funding by the state.

In addition, we would encourage the legislature to fund the County with Disability Education Boards general state aid at \$6.2 million to keep their aid payments on an equal level with district or CESA operated special education programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these very important special education concerns with you. If I can provide additional information please, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely:


Philip B. Knobel
Executive Director

KHMER STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

April 15, 1999

Sameth L. Ros
Khmer Students Association
1014 W. Badger Rd
Madison, WI 53713

Finance Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

Good afternoon. I'm here to support the goals of plan 2008. Why because it helps individuals like myself.

The majority of minority students are made up of Southeast Asian and Asians at the university. Yet despite the numbers, Southeast Asian Americans and Asian Americans are under-served. In the past two years we've had "token," temporary Southeast Asian American faculty. They are token because they are only temporary and "special projects" at the university. Lasting no more than a year.

Who am I?

My name is Sam Ros and my family has lived in Madison for over 16 years. We are voting citizens and residents of Wisconsin. I'm a senior at the University and barring unforeseen circumstances I expect to graduate this May. I'm also the first person in my family to go to college. I have two sisters. One is in the school of education and the youngest one is a senior at Memorial High School.

When I first started school I felt lost. The University of Wisconsin-Madison is a large campus. I tried to use of the minority services such as the Academic Advancement Program (AAP) to help me get through, but I felt out of place. Because it seems to be geared toward helping Blacks and Hispanics, but not a Southeast Asian like myself. The staff is mostly Blacks and Hispanics and the issues that were addressed catered to these two minority groups. The publication-newsletter was clearly expressed interest. Lip service was given that they helped all minorities. None of them helps people like myself because they lack the commitment. Under this circumstance I felt like a "token" minority among minority groups. After a while I stopped using them altogether.

For awhile I was doing OK academically, but I still felt lost and alienated from the services that were supposed to help me. Toward my last three years I depended on myself. I had to become self-reliant. I started working 40-45 hours a week during the summer to save enough money for the school year, but even that was not enough. I had to go to school part-time and work 30 hours a week to get by. I no longer accept financial aid. It's taken me longer to finish my degree. My grades have also suffered and working to put myself through

April 15, 1999

college is just one reason.

Money wise I get limited help from home. My mom is a single head of household and she makes less than \$15,000 a year at her job. After rent and food there isn't much left over. This picture of a Southeast Asian household is common, 60% of households are single parented family making less than \$20,000, but supporting more than two children.

Economically, a typical Southeast Asian family can not afford to put a son or daughter through college, alone. Without help from financial a college dream is just that-a dream.

Current programs to minorities are available, but they are *not* committed toward helping Southeast Asian American interests. Even though Asians are the majority of minorities on campus.

Closing Statements:

The Southeast Asian American community needs your help. We are asking for REAL help. Not token handouts. You need to help these people, because you are in a position to help. It is too late for you to help me. I'm graduating this May, but it is not too late for you to help my sister, Litha, and individuals like her who will be starting college this fall.

Plan 2008 will help individuals like my sister.

And remember...Money talks and everything else is just bullshit. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sameth L. Ros

WISCONSIN NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

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April 15, 1999

To the Joint Finance Committee

Re: Access fees for Computer Databases

Reference section 2353 which would create section 224.30 (3)

Speaking for the members of the Wisconsin Newspaper Association, the members of the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council and the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association, we wanted to make sure that the ability of DFI to charge the public a fee for accessing or using the Department's databases or computer systems is limited to the actual direct necessary expense of providing the record. This is and should remain the standard for access to public information.

Sandra George
Executive Director, WNA

John Laabs
Wisconsin Broadcasters Association

Altogether, thirteen teaching positions and two administrative positions have been eliminated during the four year period.

The District's recreation department was eliminated during the 1998-99 school year.

Building and site maintenance has come to a halt.

Funds for instructional supplies and equipment have been held constant since 1994-95.

Class sizes have increased at all grade levels.

Minimum QEO contracts have been implemented with the Teacher's Association.

These measures and many others have only slowed the impact of the financial problem.

As shown by Chart #3, financial forecasts indicate that the imbalance between expenditures will continue into the foreseeable future. In fact, as shown by Chart #4, unless the District dismantles its educational program, the District will be bankrupt by the year 2002-03.

IT MUST BE NOTED THAT THE FORECAST INCLUDES THE 75% HOLD HARMLESS AS PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET.

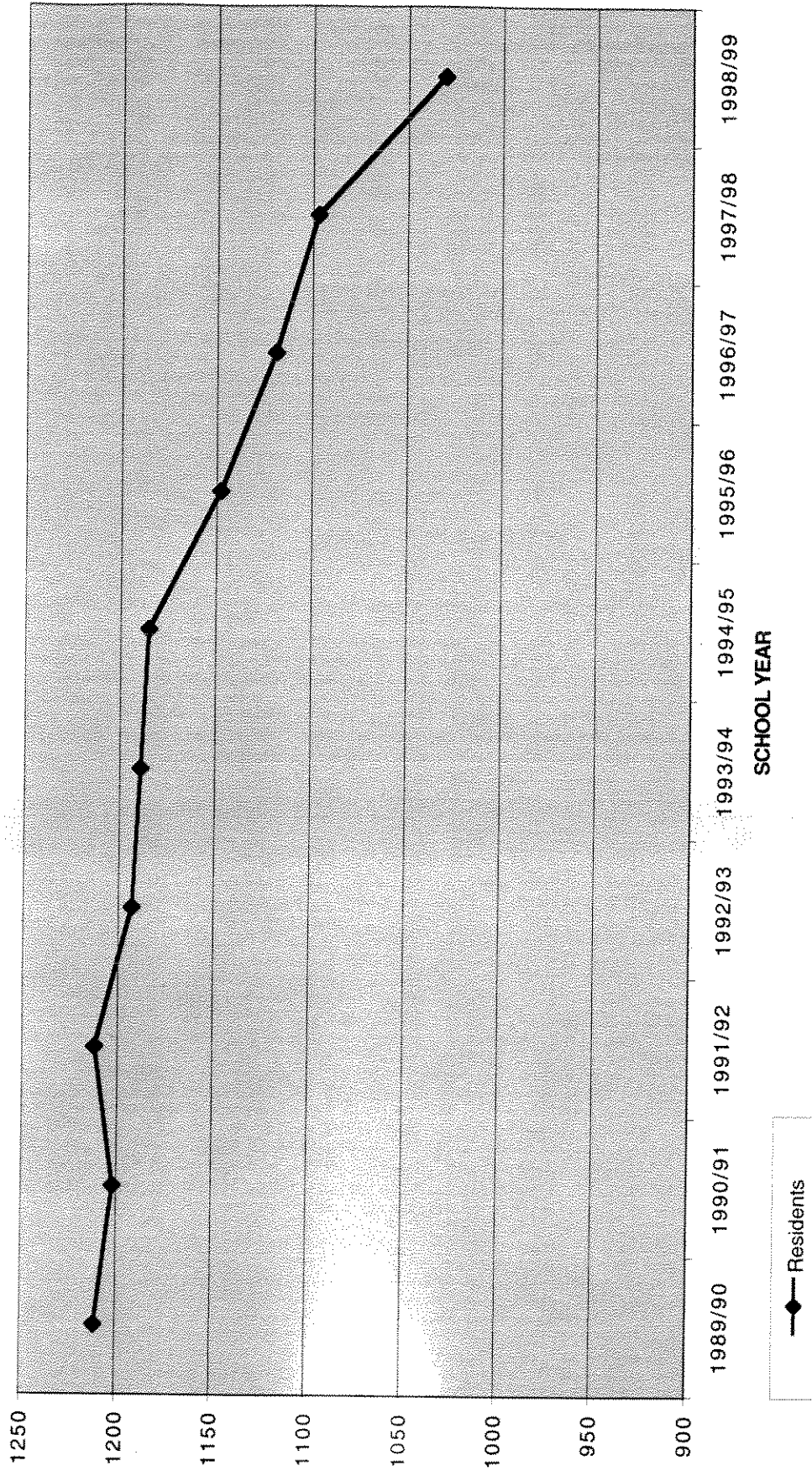
Simply stated, we need help. We are in the process of dismantling one of the finest school districts in the state. Each cut that we make creates fear on the part of our parents. This causes more families to leave the district and fewer to move in. Thus, the problem only gets worse. **CORRECTIVE ACTION MUST BE TAKEN.**

Suggestions:

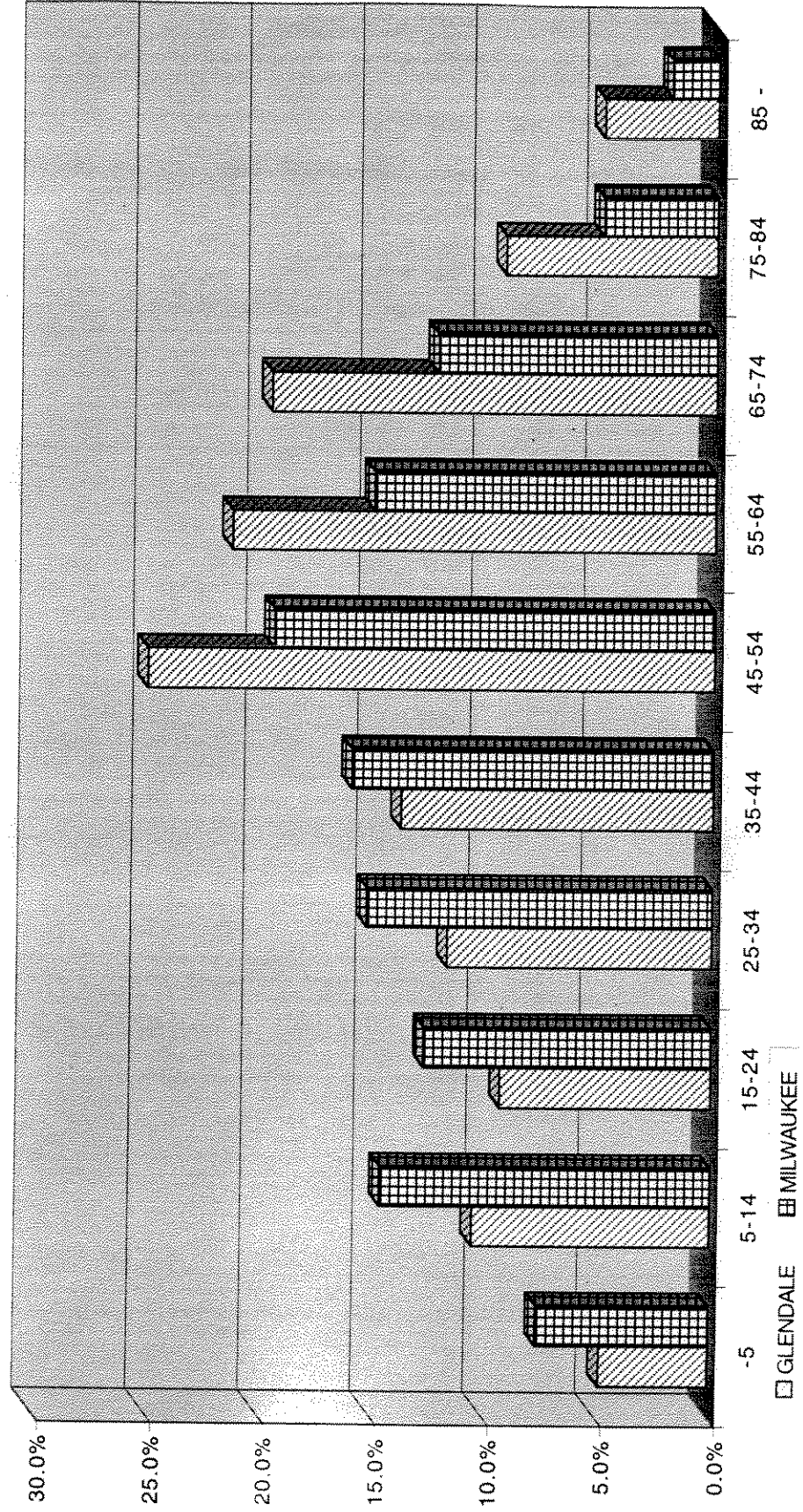
1. Approve a 75% recurring hold harmless provision for declining enrollment districts.
2. Allow districts to recover any funds not levied under the revenue cap since 1994.
3. Control compensation so that it is in line with the district ability to increase revenue.
4. Exclude building maintenance from revenue caps and allow district to increase the levy to meet building needs.
5. Increase funding levels for special education programs.

Please do not allow our school district and many other fine school districts throughout the state to be dismantled.

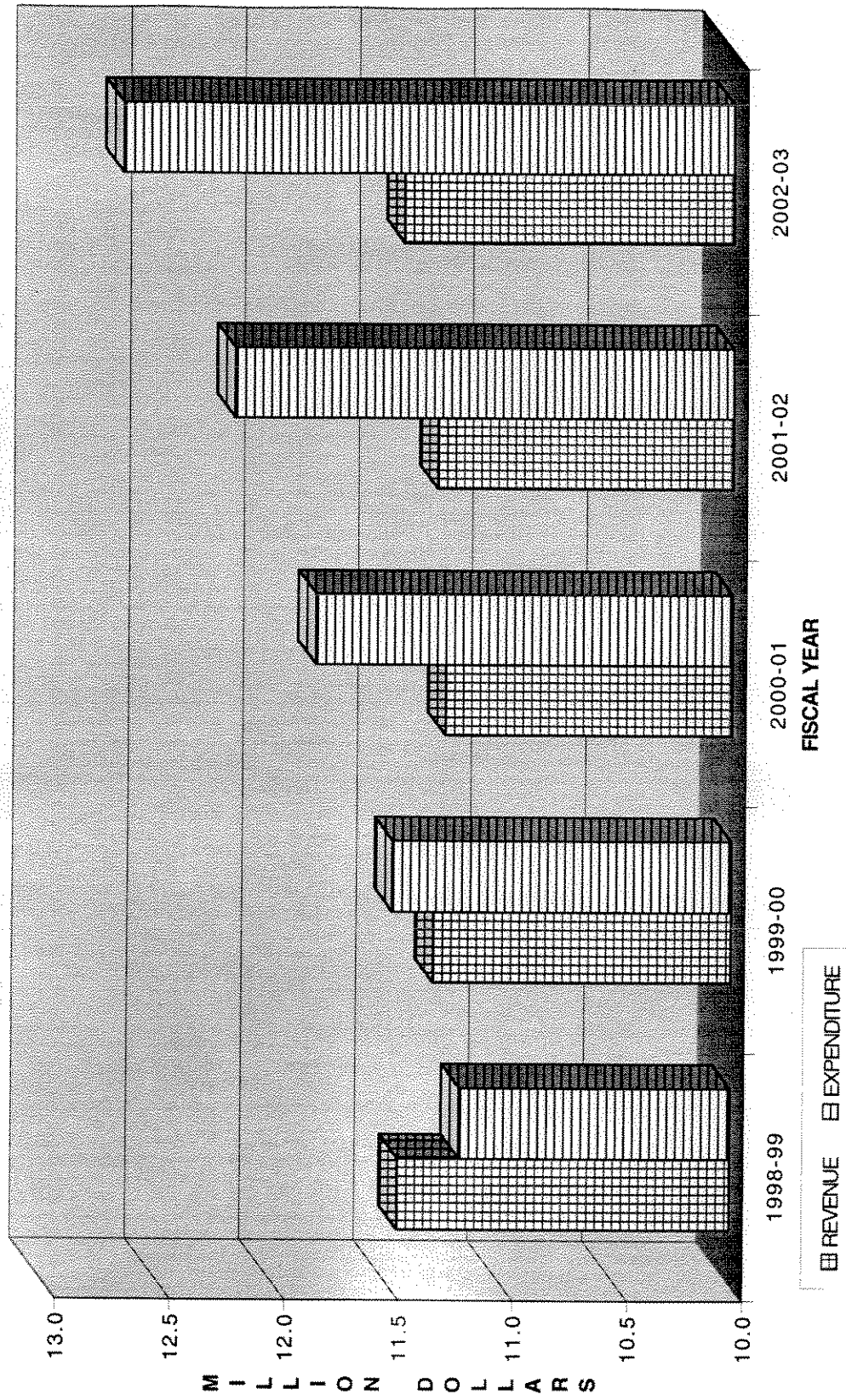
GLENDALE-RIVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT RESIDENT STUDENT ENROLLMENT



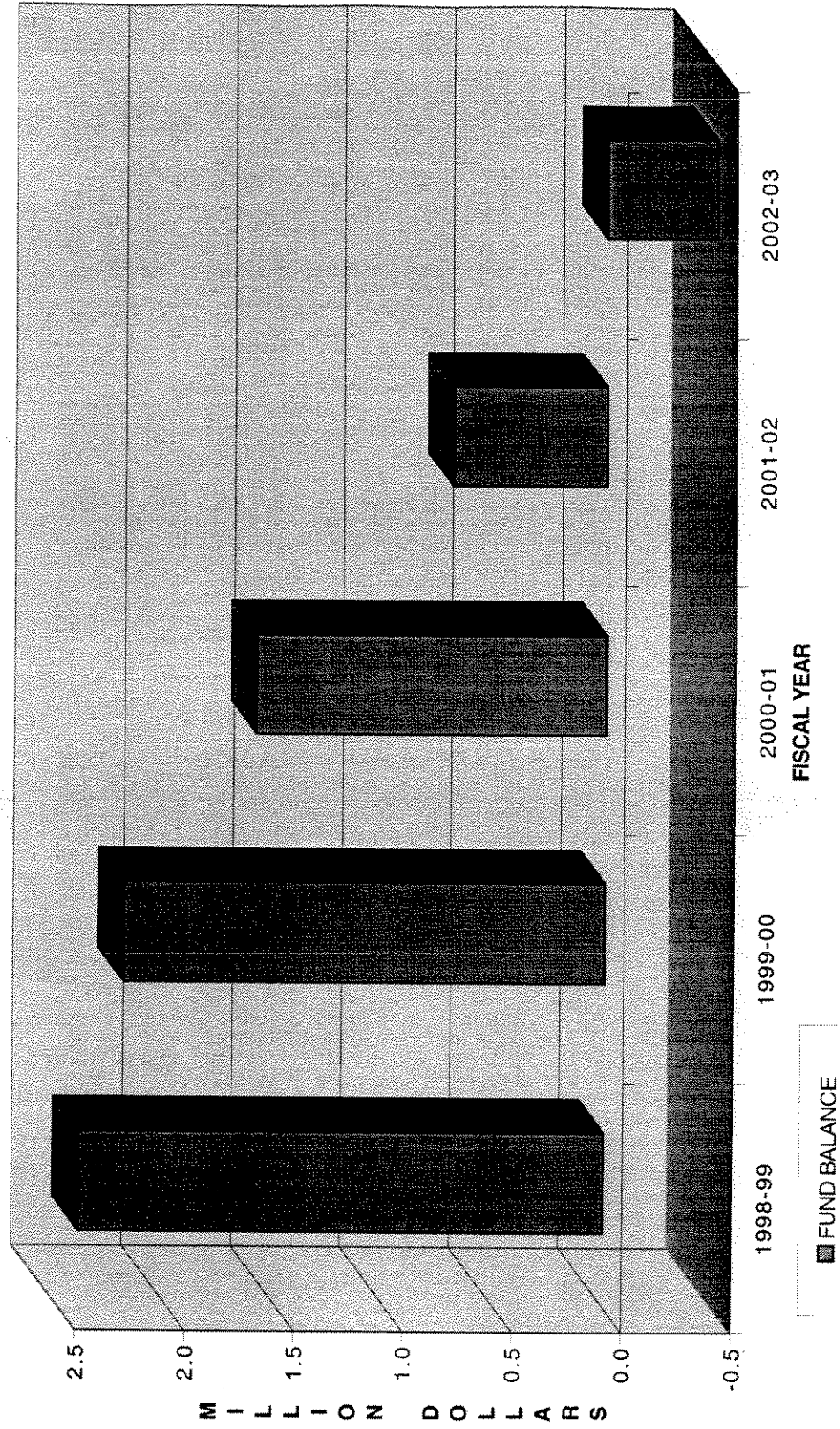
GLENDALE-RIVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT AGE COMPARISON GLENDALE VS MILWAUKEE COUNTY



GLENDALE-RIVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT PROJECTED REVENUE/EXPENDITURE



GLENDALE-RIVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT PROJECTED FUND BALANCE



GLENDAL-IVER HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

2600 W. Mill Road, Glendale, WI 53209

Preparing Today's Children to Succeed in Tomorrow's World

MEMORANDUM

April 15, 1999

TO: Members of the Joint Finance Committee
FROM: Bob Kattman

SUBJECT: Declining Enrollment, Revenue Caps, and the Impact on the Glendale-River Hills School District

Honored members of the Joint Finance Committee.

My name is Robert Kattman. I am the District Administrator of the Glendale-River Hills School District.

Thanks you for allowing me to testify today on the impact that the present revenue controls are having on the Glendale Schools.

The enrollment of the Glendale School District has significantly declined since the 1994-95 school year. Since that time, as shown by Chart #1, the District has lost 155 students or 13% of its student population. Further, this decline will continue into the foreseeable future. The District will loose 146 eight graders this year and is expected to take in only 80 four year old kindergarten students.

The decline relates to the fact that Glendale is an aging, inner ring suburb with no ability to expand. As shown on Chart 2, the population of Glendale is significantly older than the population of Milwaukee County.

Since 1994-95 the district has taken extreme measures to attempt to address its financial problems.

Expenditures for non-instructional areas have reduced to the point where they represent only 70% of the amount spent by our neighboring districts for these items.

The District Administrative Team is shared with the Maple Dale-Indian Hills School District.

Student attendance patterns have been reorganized in order to place all students in the same grade in the same school. This resulted in the reduction of six and one half teachers and one administrator between the 1996-97 and 97-98 school years.

**Testimony of
M. Bubba Blume
Speaker of the Assembly
Oshkosh Student Association
To the
Joint Committee on Finance
Madison, WI
March 5, 1998**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am here today representing the student's of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and Oshkosh Student Association President, Jess King. Pres. King is also the Vice-President of the United Council of UW System Students. In my position as Speaker of the Assembly I directly represent over 75 student organizations on campus open to all students. I am the Oshkosh equivalent of your Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen. The Oshkosh Student Association counts as its members approximately 10,000 Full Time Equivalent students attending the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. **UWO students represent the best that our state, and in part our world, has to offer.** We run the gamut when it comes to educational goals, career objectives, and are as diverse a campus as the UW System has. While this diversity is what makes us strong, what binds us together is a common interest in the happenings of this body, and your respective legislative bodies.

I have been working on a non-partisan basis for my entire college career to represent the interests of students on my campus. As such I have been discussing the state budget surplus and what should be done with it with many of the students on my campus. And while I cannot speak for every student on campus, I am able to speak for an overwhelming majority.

In my discussions with students there have been several great ideas that have repeatedly come up as to how to use this surplus effectively. When I have mentioned the Governor's plan to provide for a \$3000 tuition credit most student's eyes light up, understandably. However when the specifics of this plan are explained there has tended to be a more confused look come over the faces of students.

As I understand it, this will be a credit that will be taken right off the top of one's Adjusted Gross Income. The maximum reduction in taxes, according to the Department of Revenue, will be \$230. The average reduction in taxes would amount to \$86. Now I won't pretend to understand tax law or the mathematics behind it. But I do understand common sense, and I understand those confused looks on the faces of my constituents. And \$230 is a lot of money to most students on my campus allowing them to pay for about 2/3 the average book load for a semester. And \$86 would buy 1 or 2 textbooks. And we appreciate that effort from the Governor to improve our financial standing.

However students on my campus have come up with a few ideas of their own as to how this budget surplus could be better used to help students state-wide. I remember watching the Governor's State of the State address when this plan was announced. My first reaction was simple, honest, and immediate. If the Governor, my Governor, wants to help make a University education more affordable for more people across the state then he should use this budget surplus to do the most simple thing he can **do...lower tuition. Lowering tuition across the board would help every student that is in the UW System**, and would help to make a UW education more affordable and possible for more graduating high school seniors across the state. It is the easiest thing for the Governor, and for the Legislature to do.

Other good ideas have come from my campus on how to best utilize this **surplus** to help student's in the UW System. In last years budget cycle our faculty were given a much needed, and much appreciated, raise in their salary. The responsibility of paying for this raise was handed to students through the tuition flexibility plan passed as part of last years budget. Now I don't have any problem with anyone asking students to pay their fair share when it comes to faculty raises. That is only right to ask since we are the primary beneficiaries of their skills and **knowledge. But the State must also recognize how much it benefits from their presence** on our campuses. And in so doing it must also take responsibility for paying its fair share of salary increases. This budget surplus affords you the Legislature the opportunity to take that responsibility and fund $\frac{1}{2}$ of the salary increase.

There are many factors that lead to student's spending more time than may be absolutely necessary in the UW System. I believe one of the major factors is the quality of Academic Advising available on our campuses. At UW Oshkosh there are fewer than 10 academic advisors to help approximately 10,000 students. This affords each student about 5 minutes a year with an advisor to help them plan their academic career. **It is not nearly enough time to accurately advise each student, or to asses each students individual life situation** so as to plan academics around those factors. Academic advising on our campus, as well as campuses across the State, needs to be improved. Inadequate advising leads to students taking unnecessary courses, thus prolonging their time at the University. And when there time at the University is prolonged, they end up using more of the precious few resources available from each campus. Perhaps a more effective use of this surplus would be to expand the Academic Advising Pilot Program to include more campuses, including at least one UW College campus.

The final and very often repeated idea, from my constituents is classroom modernization. I am not completely sure about the accommodations in each of your individual offices but I'd be willing to bet none of you work at a desk similar to the desks we work with on the UW Oshkosh campus. They are those little things with the half desktop. They are not exactly the best for 3 hours classes beginning at 6:30 p.m., of which I have 3 such classes this semester. And they most certainly are not made for those of us who run toward having more than one X in our shirt size! Also, we see the information age happening all around us with changes occurring almost daily. Our

classrooms are not equipped to take advantage of this new technology and they should be. **PC's with projection systems should be available for each classroom.** Our classrooms at UW Oshkosh have a severe deficiency when it comes to pull-down maps available, especially in international political science courses. There are literally hundreds of ways to improve classrooms that will improve the education received by students. All you and our Governor need to do is ask students and faculty what they need and we'll be more than happy to let you know.

It all comes down to one basic idea: Where the rubber meets the road the Governor's idea for a tuition tax credit is at least a step in the right direction. And it will provide some much needed, and much deserved, relief to students in Wisconsin. But there are many ways the money set aside for this credit can be better used to help improve the University system this State holds so dear. We have a proud tradition of excellence at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, and we want desperately to pass this on to as wide a variety of student as we can get through our doors. Please consider the **opinions and ideas of the students of UW Oshkosh when you decide how to best spend this money.** And remember one thing: The Oshkosh Student Association is always working diligently to get our constituents to vote. And vote their interest in higher education.


Thank you for your time, and for sharing in our commitment to excellence.

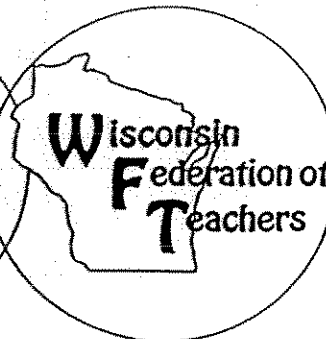
Sincerely,

M. Bubba Blume
Speaker of the Assembly
Oshkosh Student Association

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
1997-99 BUDGET ADJUSTMENT BILL (SB 436/AB 768)
THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 1998**

BY

**JOHN STOCKS, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS DIRECTOR
WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL**

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK CO-CHAIRPERSONS SENATOR BURKE AND REPRESENTATIVE GARD AND MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE FOR SCHEDULING THIS PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED 1997-99 BUDGET ADJUSTMENT BILL SB 436/AB 768. I AM JOHN STOCKS, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS FOR THE WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL (WEAC). I APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY ON BEHALF OF THE WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL AND THE WISCONSIN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS.

THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET ADJUSTMENT BILL CONTAINS A VARIETY OF ITEMS WHICH WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON CHILDREN IN WISCONSIN AND ON THE ABILITY OF EDUCATORS TO SERVE THEM IN THE SCHOOLS AND STATE FACILITIES THROUGHOUT WISCONSIN. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEFLY DISCUSS SOME OF THE PROPOSALS IN THE BILL.

GENERAL FUND TAXES AND REVENUE EDUCATION TAX BENEFIT PROPOSAL:
(LFB Summary Pg. 7 Item #1)

THE STATE MUST PAY ITS BILLS BEFORE GIVING TAX BREAKS TO PEOPLE. THE BIENNIAL BUDGET BILL (WI ACT 27) INCLUDES A WISELY CONSTRUCTED PROVISION DESIGNED TO PAY FUTURE OBLIGATIONS FIRST. THE PROVISION, AUTHORED BY SENATOR COWLES, REQUIRES THE STATE TO USE THE FIRST \$195 MILLION OF ANY UNANTICIPATED REVENUES TO PAY FOR FUTURE COMMITMENTS RELATING TO COMPENSATION RESERVES AND SCHOOL AID FUNDS. THAT PROVISION WON STRONG BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT AND WAS APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR. WEAC AND THE WFT APPLAUDED THOSE EFFORTS.

ONCE FUTURE OBLIGATIONS ARE MET, HOWEVER, IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER APPROPRIATING \$65 MILLION DOLLARS FOR K-12 EDUCATION TAX CREDITS AND DEDUCTIONS IS THE BEST USE OF SURPLUS DOLLARS.

THE GOAL SHOULD BE TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WISCONSIN'S CHILDREN. THE COMMITTEE SHOULD BUILD UPON PREVIOUSLY SUPPORTED EFFORTS. LOWERING K-3 CLASS SIZE BY EXPANDING THE SAGE PROGRAM, PROVIDING RELIEF UNDER THE REVENUE CONTROLS SO SCHOOL DISTRICTS CAN CONTINUE TO OFFER SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS, IMPROVING THE SKILLS OF EDUCATORS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENSURING THAT EVERY CHILD IN WISCONSIN IS TAUGHT IN SAFE, MODERN SCHOOL FACILITIES TO

LEARNING ARE ALL EXAMPLES OF THE BEST KIND OF INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS MODIFIED SALARY COMPONENT OF A QEO:
(LFB Summary Pg. 46 Item #1)

WEAC AND THE WFT ARE PLEASED THAT THE GOVERNOR SEES A NEED TO CHANGE THE QEO. UNFORTUNATELY, THE GOVERNOR'S MODIFICATION WHOLLY INADEQUATE. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS REAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE QEO LAW. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THE LAW SHOULD BE REPEALED ENTIRELY AS BILLS AUTHORED BY SENATOR SHIBILISKI AND OTHERS REQUIRE.

THE QEO LAW ELIMINATED THE ARBITRATION PROCESS THAT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LONG PERIOD OF LABOR PEACE IN OUR SCHOOLS. UNDER THAT LAW, A NEUTRAL THIRD-PARTY ARBITRATOR RESOLVED CONTRACT DISPUTES. ARBITRATION AWARDS WERE ABOUT EVENLY SPLIT BETWEEN TEACHERS AND SCHOOL BOARDS. TEACHER SALARIES ROSE AT A MODEST RATE, IN LINE WITH TEACHER SALARY INCREASES IN NEIGHBORING STATES.

WHEN THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE EFFECTIVELY ELIMINATED ARBITRATION IN 1993 AND IMPOSED REVENUE CONTROLS ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS, THEY WROTE THE SCRIPT THAT IS BEING PLAYED OUT TODAY.

THESE LAWS NOT ONLY ARE TEARING OUR COMMUNITIES APART, THEY ARE THREATENING THE QUALITY OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM. UNLESS THESE LAWS ARE CHANGED, PROBLEMS ARE SURE TO ESCALATE IN YEARS TO

COME.

DHFS RELOCATION SERVICES FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE STATE CENTERS:
(LFB Summary Pg. 64 Item #2)

WEAC AND THE WFT SUPPORT THE REALLOCATION OF FUNDING TO PAY FOR RELOCATION COSTS FOR STAFF AT THE STATE CENTERS FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED WHO ARE LAID OFF AS A RESULT OF POPULATION REDUCTIONS AT THE CENTERS. THIS FUNDING FULFILLS THE STATE'S OBLIGATIONS CONTAINED IN THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE WEAC STATE EMPLOYEE AFFILIATE AND THE STATE OF WISCONSIN TO PROVIDE RELOCATION SERVICES TO THOSE LAID OFF EMPLOYEES. CURRENTLY, NEARLY 30 TEACHERS AT THE THREE CENTERS HAVE BEEN OR ARE TO BE LAID OFF.

PUBLIC DEFENDER FUNDING FOR INCREASES IN ATTORNEYS' SALARIES
(LFB Summary Pg. 87 Item #1)

WEAC AND THE WFT SUPPORT THE PROVISIONS IN THE BUDGET ADJUSTMENT BILL TO PROVIDE INCREASES FOR PUBLIC DEFENDER ATTORNEY SALARIES OF APPROXIMATELY 5% ANNUALLY.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:

GRANT PROGRAM FOR TEACHER PEER REVIEW AND MENTORING:
(LFB Summary Pg. 89 Item #2)

WEAC AND THE WFT SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A PILOT PEER MENTORING PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS. A WELL-PREPARED, WELL-TRAINED TEACHING FORCE WILL ENSURE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN WISCONSIN

SCHOOLS REMAINS AMONG THE BEST IN THE NATION.

PEER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCED TEACHERS TO HELP OUT NEW TEACHERS OR THOSE NEEDING TO IMPROVE SOME SKILLS. A KEY EXAMPLE OF THIS CONCEPT IS THE TEACHER EVALUATION AND MENTORING (TEAM) PROGRAM IN MILWAUKEE.

THE TEAM PROGRAM IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE MILWAUKEE TEACHERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. THE PROGRAM IS PREMISED ON THE PHILOSOPHY THAT IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF MILWAUKEE'S CHILDREN AND TEACHING STAFF FOR THE SYSTEM TO PROVIDE INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS WHO SHOW A NEED FOR ASSISTANCE IN THEIR CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE.

IN ADDITION, MILWAUKEE IS ONE OF THE FEW CITIES NATIONWIDE TO HAVE FULL-TIME MENTORS. MILWAUKEE'S MENTORS SERVE APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS. THE BENEFITS OF THIS PROGRAM INCLUDE ONGOING AND IMMEDIATE COLLABORATION TO STRENGTHEN THE NEW TEACHER EXPERIENCE THROUGH FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT. THESE ARE EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORING PROGRAMS IN WISCONSIN THAT SHOULD BE EMULATED BY OTHER DISTRICTS.

NATIONAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION:
(LFB Summary Pg. 89 Item #3)

THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL FOR NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS (NBPTS) CERTIFICATION INCENTIVES MIRRORS WEAC'S

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA ITEM ON NATIONAL CERTIFICATION. WE ARE GRATIFIED THE GOVERNOR RECOGNIZES THE VALUE OF TEACHERS GOING THROUGH THE ARDUOUS AND CHALLENGING NBPTS PROCESS. CERTIFICATION BENEFITS TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ALIKE. WHILE A ONE-TIME INCENTIVE FOR TEACHERS TO VOLUNTARILY GAIN NBPTS CERTIFICATION AND TO PAY HALF OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS FEE IS AN EXCELLENT OFFER, WE ENCOURAGE SUPPORT FOR A PROPOSAL AUTHORED BY SENATORS ROSENZWEIG, POTTER AND OTHERS TO PROVIDE A CONTINUED SALARY INCENTIVE THAT LASTS FOR THE DURATION OF THE NBPTS CERTIFICATION.

PROMOTION TO 5TH AND 9TH GRADES:
(LFB Summary Pg. 90 Item #4)

WEAC AND THE WFT SUPPORT A PROHIBITION ON THE SOCIAL PROMOTION TO 5TH AND 9TH GRADE IF STUDENTS WHO ARE HELD BACK ARE PLACED IN APPROPRIATE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS. RESEARCH HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT HOLDING STUDENTS BACK WITHOUT ALTERNATIVES IS NOT SUCCESSFUL. WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE RETAINED? WILL PROGRAMS TO MEET THEIR NEEDS BE ESTABLISHED (E.G. SUMMER SCHOOL), OR WILL THEY SIMPLY REPEAT THE GRADE?

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT RETENTION CAN PREVENT STUDENTS FROM BEING ABLE TO CATCH UP; THEY FALL FURTHER BEHIND. A CHILD WHO FLUNKS A SINGLE GRADE HAS BUT A ONE IN FIFTY CHANCE OF GRADUATING. WITHOUT THE PROPER COMMITMENT TO ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS, THIS

PROPOSAL MAY ACTUALLY INCREASE THE DROPOUT RATE, WITHOUT ACCOMPLISHING THE LARGER GOAL OF IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK CHAIRPERSONS BURKE AND GARD AND MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ON THE 1997-99 BUDGET ADJUSTMENT BILL.

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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Testimony By

**Dr. Rolf Wegenke, President
Wisconsin Association of Independent
Colleges and Universities**

**1997-99 STATE BUDGET ADJUSTMENT BILL
HIGHER EDUCATION TAX DEDUCTION**

Joint Committee on Finance

March 5, 1998

Good Afternoon. Senator Burke, Representative Gard, Members of the Committee. My name is Rolf Wegenke, and I am president of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or WAICU. WAICU is an association of the twenty-one independent or private four-year, non-profit colleges and universities in the state. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and share my comments on the Higher Education Tax Deduction proposed by the Governor in the 1998-99 budget adjustment bill (AB 768 / SB 436).

I have always subscribed to the theory behind the British phrase that one "takes" a degree, as opposed to the more common American phrase that one "receives" a degree. No one can give you an education. Teaching and learning are a collaborative process between the professor and the student.

ALVERNO COLLEGE *Milwaukee* BELOIT COLLEGE *Beloit* CARDINAL STRITCH UNIVERSITY *Milwaukee* CARROLL COLLEGE *Waukesha*
CARTHAGE COLLEGE *Kenosha* CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY *Mequon* EDGEWOOD COLLEGE *Madison* LAKELAND
COLLEGE *Sheboygan* LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY *Appleton* MARIAN COLLEGE *Fond du Lac* MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY *Milwaukee*
MILWAUKEE INSTITUTE OF ART & DESIGN *Milwaukee* MILWAUKEE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING *Milwaukee* MOUNT MARY
COLLEGE *Milwaukee* MOUNT SENARIO COLLEGE *Ladysmith* NORTHLAND COLLEGE *Ashland* RIPON COLLEGE *Ripon* ST. NORBERT
COLLEGE *DePere* SILVER LAKE COLLEGE *Monitowoc* VITERBO COLLEGE *La Crosse* WISCONSIN LUTHERAN COLLEGE *Milwaukee*

Education is also a collaborative process among the colleges and universities, the government, students, and their families. Wisconsin's private, or independent, colleges and universities, by their emphasis on the individual learner and on cross-disciplinary studies and critical thinking skills, are fully engaged in this collaboration. Their small class size (just 17 students, on average) and over 150 years of emphasis on a rigorous curriculum demonstrate the depth of this effort.

There also needs to be a collaboration on the financing of education -- one which involves the college or university, the government, and students and their families. Wisconsin's private colleges and universities receive no subsidies from the taxpayers. However, 80 percent of all students attending an independent institution of higher learning in Wisconsin receive financial aid. Over 70 percent of the grant aid is from the colleges and universities themselves and from other private sources. The remainder comes equally from state and federal student aid programs. Clearly, the independent sector is doing its part. A national study completed a few years back showed that all ten of the top ten providers of student aid in Wisconsin were private colleges and universities.

The role government is highly significant. Government funds are targeted to the poorest of the poor. This student aid stands as an opportunity for advancement -- a doorway to a better life for individuals and a stronger economy for the state.

Then comes the student and, in many cases, his or her family. They, too, are joined in partnership to finance educational opportunity. Governor Tommy Thompson has proposed a

\$3,000 tax deduction for college and university tuition. This is truly help for those who help themselves; help for those who "fall through the cracks" for most governmental student aid programs; help for those who make sacrifices and and save.

The Governor's proposals not only help college students and their families; they help every single citizen in Wisconsin. Wisconsin is already in transition to the information age. Studies show that the fastest- growing occupations in the next century will require a college degree. Many Wisconsin employers cannot find the educated employees they need. If we don't invest in education now, our economy will not support the quality of life that makes Wisconsin special. And, if we don't support the state government's helping those who help themselves, we run the risk of having government bear all the costs down the road.

This concludes my remarks. I again wish to thank the committee and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

WANS MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS



Christian Schools International
District IV

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Diocese of Green Bay

Diocese of LaCrosse

Diocese of Madison

Diocese of Superior

Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
Northern Wisconsin District

Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
Southern Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Conference of
Seventh Day Adventists

Wisconsin Association of
Independent Schools

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod

My name is Leland Nagel and I am president of the Wisconsin Association of Nonpublic Schools. I am testifying in support of the tax credit/deduction features in the State Budget Adjustment Bill, AB768/SB436. The Mission Statement of WANS addresses the concerns of all parents and all students in this state. We do, however, represent approximately 150,000 students which is approximately one-sixth of Wisconsin's student population. Minus transportation costs that is a savings of over \$600 million to the state treasury in terms of financial assistance to public schools and almost a billion dollars of tax savings to the entire state. I'm here to ask your endorsement and support of the state budget adjustment bill in terms of the education area.

These two legislative bills do not single out a particular group of parents. In fact, they affirm parental rights and the importance of parental involvement in education. This legislation and the tax deductions it allows, benefits all parents of school age children whether their children attend public or nonpublic elementary or secondary schools. Just this week newspapers recounted that nearly 6,000 students have participated in public school choice. In addition, the state has students who have chosen to enroll in charter schools and another 150,000 students are enrolled in non-public schools.

Anyone who has a child enrolled in a school in the state of Wisconsin will be eligible for these tax deductions. This is a significant affirmation of the investment parents make in their children's education. We see this as just another step in the educational reform efforts already passed by this legislature.

These legislative measures support parents in their efforts to provide their children with the best possible education. Parents are able to claim expenses for a wide range of fees including: extra-curricular fees, summer school costs and expenses for home computers and computer software. It is important that we understand education not only occurs in the classroom five days a week for 40 weeks, but that it continues after school, on weekends and in the summer. This proposal acknowledges the efforts parents put in providing these additional educational opportunities for their children by reducing the taxes owed the state.

Parental involvement, which we know is so critical to the success of a student, is supported by these measures. Parents who care and exercise their rights to choose a different school know that it will cost them more money. Transportation becomes their responsibility in public school choice. This legislation allows them to recoup a small amount of their expense. Parents receive affirmation when they invest in their child's education. The state supports their efforts and provides some financial incentive on their income tax return.

We believe, along with the United National Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that "parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children." With the support and assistance of this legislation we can legitimately state that parents are assisted in exercising their rights.

Some may argue the constitutionality of this financial assistance, but it was affirmed by the courts in the Mueller vs. Allen case in 1983. The court affirmed a Minnesota Statute providing tax credits for educational expenses that these measures did not have the primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion. As this program was modeled after the one most recently passed by the Minnesota legislature, I find no reason to question its constitutionality.

While the education portion of the state budget adjustment bill, AB768/SB436 is not a bill for Lutherans or Catholics or Seventh-Day Adventists, it is a bill for parents; for all parents regardless of where they choose to send their children to school. It is not a bill for the rich, the poor or the middle class; it is a bill that recognizes that all parents, regardless of income level, have additional educational costs that are not covered by tuition or government financing. This is not a bill for Caucasians or Native Americans or African Americans, but rather a bill that recognizes all of us together create the state of Wisconsin and that each family deserves assistance as it strives to provide an educational environment that will assist students in being prepared to face the 21st Century and ultimately to be a part of the common good that has shaped the state of Wisconsin.

If we truly believe that parents have the greatest influence on a child's educational development, if we deeply understand that education occurs outside the four walls of a school, if we continually expect parents to pay book fees, band fees, computer fees, art fees, camp fees, extra-curricular fees, and not provide some financial support to them for these additional costs, the ultimate result is the denial of a student to participate in these opportunities. This student will be unable to develop his/her full potential. In the end we are not true to our commitment to serve the common good of this state and we will be the losers. I encourage you to support the educational tax credits and deductions found in the Senate Budget Adjustment Bill, AB768/SB436.



United Council

of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

122 State Street, Suite 500, Madison, WI 53703 Phone: (608) 263-3422 Fax: (608) 265-4070

Testimony of

John Grabel

United Council Legislative Affairs Director

on the Budget Adjustment Bill, SB 436/AB 768
(\$3,000 Tax Deduction For College Tuition)

Before the Joint Committee on Finance

March 5, 1998

Chairman Burke, Chairman Gard, members of the committee, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

The budget adjustment bill, proposes to offer a tax deduction of up to \$3,000 for tuition payments to students and their families to off set the cost of higher education. While students appreciate the Governor's desire to combat the costs of higher education, they do not see this as the most effective means to fight the battle.

The tax deduction outlined in this bill does not offer the type of assistance necessary to aid students and families struggling to meet the rising tuition at Wisconsin's public institutions. Families that are finding it more and more difficult to attend UW System will not benefit significantly from this deduction.

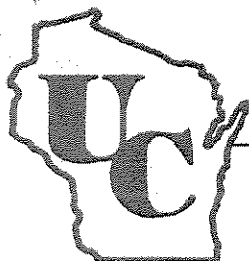
Under the proposed deduction the average tax reduction for those eligible will be \$86 according to the Department of Revenue. A reduction of this size does not increase accessibility to UW System for students and families finding financial aid insufficient to cover the expenses of obtaining a higher education and facing an average debt of \$13,332 upon graduating from UW System. These are the people most affected by tuition increases.

We are currently in a time of economic prosperity, yet we are not making education a priority. Wisconsin takes pride in the status it holds as an educational leader in this country but is losing that status in a time when state dollars are abundant.

The state budget surplus has created a situation where Wisconsin can re-prioritize higher education. By allocating the portion of the budget surplus slated for the tax deduction towards tuition reduction

and grant based financial aid programs, the state would show a strong commitment to providing educational opportunity to everyone.

Administering higher education policy through the tax code is not an effective way to provide educational opportunity. The purpose of our public universities is to provide education to the people of Wisconsin. Unfortunately, the people of Wisconsin are finding that education more and more unattainable. However, investing in the UW System and providing grant based aid will make that education possible again.



United Council

of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

122 State Street, Suite 500, Madison, WI 53703 Phone: (608) 263-3422 Fax: (608) 265-4070

Testimony of

Julie Wroblewski

United Council Women's Issues Director

on the Budget Adjustment Bill, SB 436/AB 768
(\$3,000 Tax Deduction For College Tuition)

Before the Joint Committee on Finance

March 5, 1998

Chairman Burke, Chairman Gard, members of the committee, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

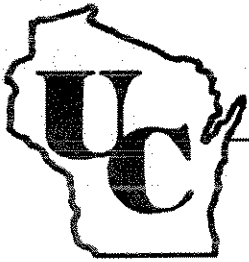
Tuition at UW System has increased at two and a half times the rate of inflation over the past twenty years. The 1997-99 state budget created an 7.9% increase in tuition at UW System for the 1997-98 academic year. This equals a \$210 increase in tuition over the previous year. This was due to several factors, most notably the lack of state General Purpose Revenue (GPR) funding for the system. The 1995-97 biennial budget decreased GPR funding to UW System. The 1997-99 biennial budget increased state support for UW System, but did not make up for the previous biennium's decrease.

In the early 1980's tuition equaled approximately 26% of the cost of instruction to educate students at UW institutions. This number rose sharply in the late 80's and early 90's to the point where this year students will pay 35.8% of the cost of instruction. While students have continued to contribute an increasing share of their education, the state of Wisconsin has divested in UW System.

In 1973-74 the state of Wisconsin funded 49.9% of the UW System's budget. As recently as the 1987-88 academic year the state funded 37.52% of the cost of education, for the 1997-98 academic year that number dropped to 33.75%.

While the rest of the nation makes higher education a priority, Wisconsin is falling dangerously behind. 1997-98 appropriations resulted in an average increase in states' investment of almost 10% in public universities nationwide. Here in Wisconsin we failed to make up for the decrease in funding UW System received in the previous biennium.

Wisconsin needs to re-prioritize higher education. Investing in UW System and increasing state support for higher education in Wisconsin is a more effective way of fighting the rising costs of college than through tax deductions.



United Council

of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

122 State Street, Suite 500, Madison, WI 53703 Phone: (608) 263-3422 Fax: (608) 265-4070

Testimony of

Crystal Voigt

United Council Multicultural Issues Director

on the Budget Adjustment Bill, SB 436/AB 768
(\$3,000 Tax Deduction For College Tuition)

Before the Joint Committee on Finance

March 5, 1998

Chairman Burke, Chairman Gard, members of the committee, good afternoon and thank you for allowing me to address you today.

Over half (54%) of all undergraduate students rely upon financial aid to cover the costs of attending UW System institutions. Almost three-fifths (58%) of UW System resident undergraduates will graduate in debt, and that debt is increasing at an alarming rate.

In 1991, the average debt of a UW System resident undergraduate upon receiving a baccalaureate degree was \$7,317. By 1997, that number rose to \$13,332, or an increase of just over \$1,000 a year in a six-year period. In the six-year period prior to 1991 the average debt upon graduation increased by only \$1,100. The greater reliance on loan programs is a result of the scarcity of grant-based financial aid and the inability of the grant aid available to cover the costs of college.

The Pell Grant, the nation's largest need-based grant program, was originally designed to cover the entire cost of attending public institutions of higher education. In 1997 the Pell Grant was appropriated at a maximum award of \$3,000. The average yearly cost of attending a UW System four-year institution when room, meals, transportation, and books are taken into account was \$8,114 in 1996-1997.

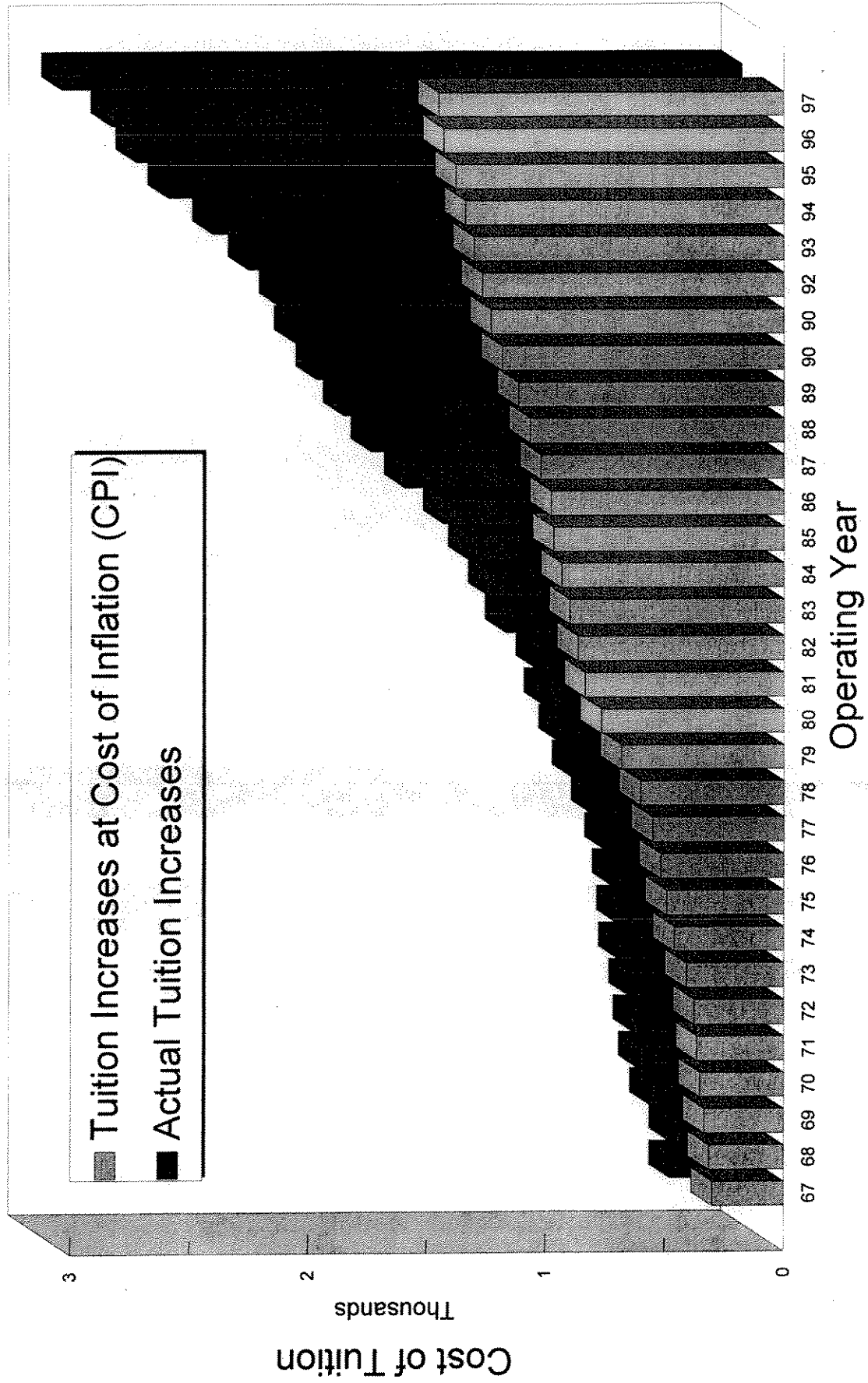
The Wisconsin Higher Education Grant (WHEG), received by just under one in every five UW students, covers approximately one-half of tuition at UW System institutions. This is after the legislature passed a 20% increase in the program.

The funding of grant programs is so far behind the cost of attending college that even those who receive such aid need to take out additional assistance to pay for their higher education. 62% of

financially needy UW resident undergraduates had unmet need after aid was provided. This forces students to work more hours and take fewer classes in order to afford college. The result of both of these actions is increased time to degree and higher drop rates.

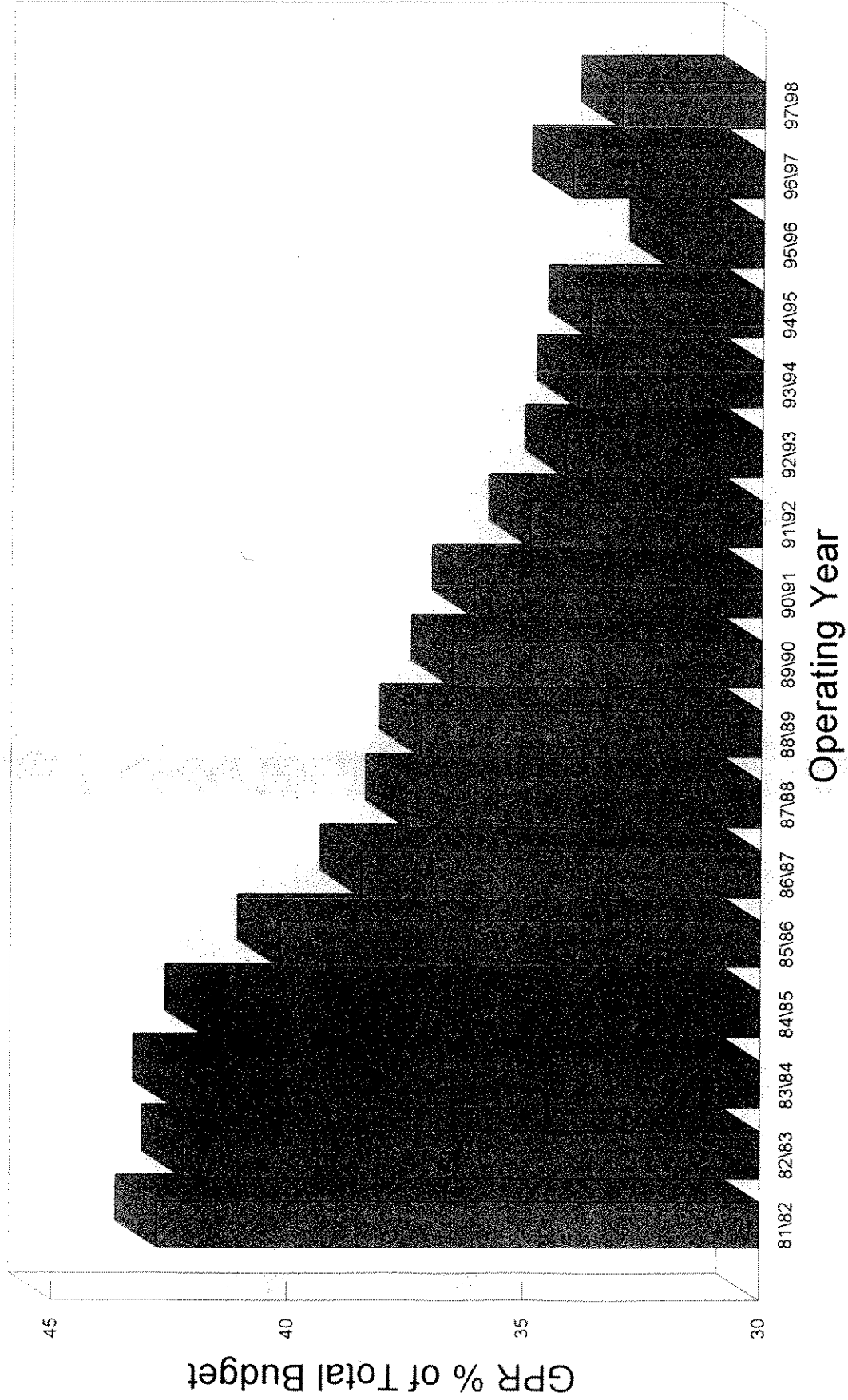
Students recognize the growing dependence on loans as a way of paying for college and feel action needs to be taken to curb this trend. Increasing grant-based aid is the most effective way to combat reliance on loans by people in need of financial aid to pay for the costs of higher education.

Actual Tuition Increases vs. Tuition Increases at Consumer Price Index (CPI)



Sources: Economic Report of the President 02/94, Bureau of Labor Statistics
 For more information contact United Council of UW Students at 608/263-3422. Copyright 09/97 UC of UW Students, Inc.

GPR As % of Total UW System Budget

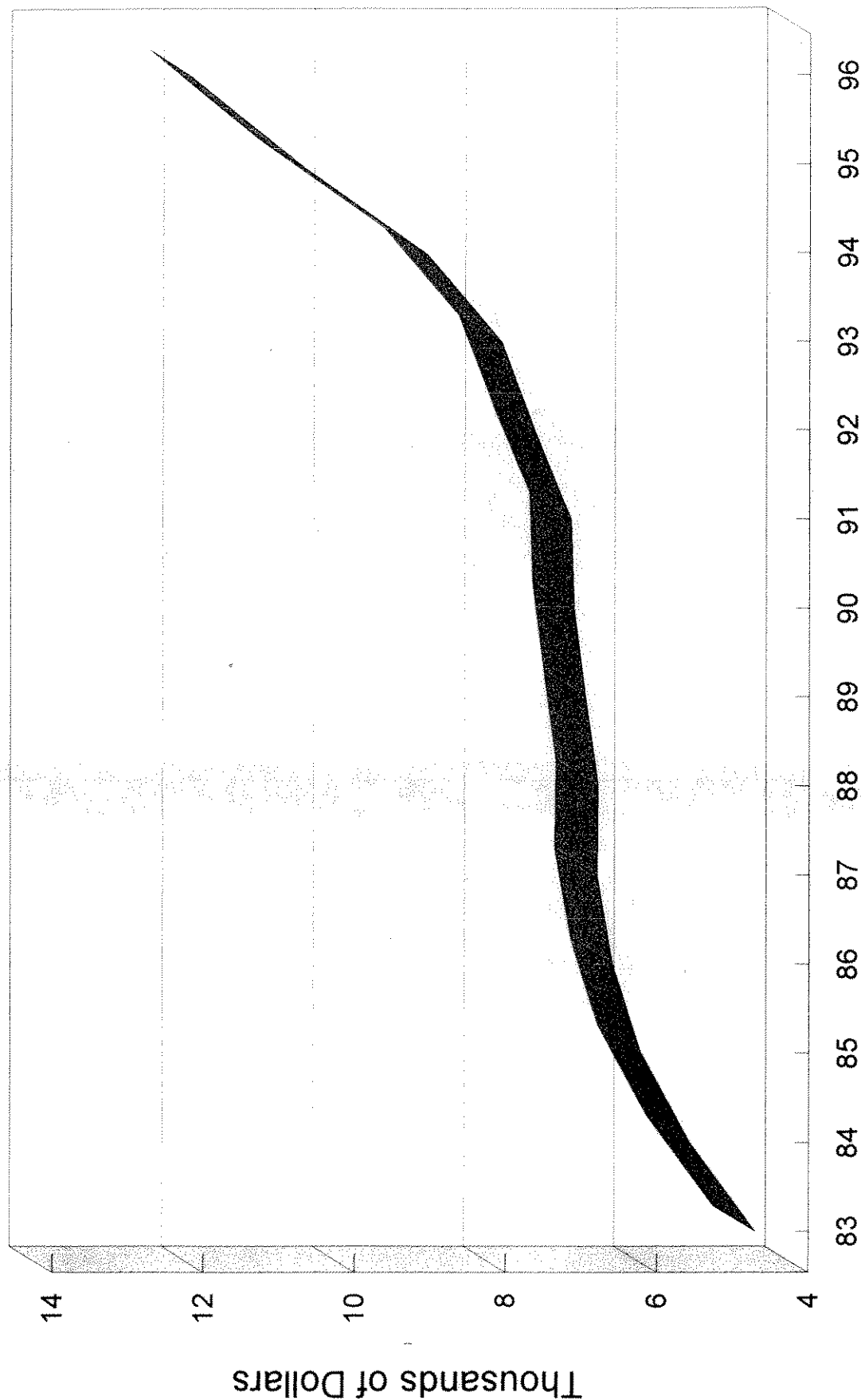


Sources: UW System Fact Books 81-96, Board of Regents

For more information contact United Council of UW Students at 608/263-3422. Copyright 09/97 UC of UW Students, Inc.

Average UW System Student Debt Upon Graduation

(1983-1996)



Source: University of Wisconsin System Budget and Planning Office

For more information, contact United Council of UW Students, 608/263-3422. Copyright 09/97 UC of UW Students, Inc.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
PLATTEVILLE

March 5, 1998

Joint Finance Committee
State of Wisconsin

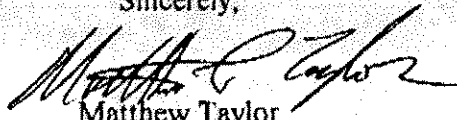
Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you today in regards to our students concern about the Governor's Proposal for the budget surplus to be applied towards a tax deduction for higher education.

We at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville believe strongly that the Governor's Proposal for a tax deduction is not the appropriate avenue to impact higher education in the state of Wisconsin most effectively. The average person that receives funding from the Governor's Proposal will only receive under \$100 in a tax deduction. A tax deduction does not increase accessibility to institutions of higher education in the state of Wisconsin due to students and parents having to pay tuition, fees, housing, etc, up front.

We strongly urge the committee to recommend that the budget surplus be applied to lowering tuition and other expenses resulting from pursuing a higher education degree in the state of Wisconsin as well as increase funding for state grant based aid programs.

Sincerely,



Matthew Taylor

Legislative Affairs Director

Student Senate

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

5 March, 1998

Mr. Chairmen, and Members of the Joint Finance Committee,

My name is John Morgan; I am a graduate of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and am currently second year law student at the UW. I am here today to express my personal concerns about the higher education "tax deduction" in S. 436 which the committee is considering today.

My father who graduated from the UW in 1969, tells me how he worked his way through college on a minimum wage job, and living at home. Of course he also reminds me that he paid only slightly more per semester, than I paid for each credit that I took at the UW in the 1990's. To put the cost of education into perspective, when I investigated taking a three-credit law school course last summer, the cost was in excess of \$1000. Why such a difference?

I believe it is because we as a State have lost sight of the Wisconsin Idea, that every talented youth of Wisconsin can and should be able to attend an institution of higher instruction, and that we will not permit things like cost to be an artificial barrier to entry. The State has supported this mission by keeping tuition affordable (i.e. tuition increases to a minimum) and by providing aid to students with need. Let's analyze S. 436 on how it achieves these ends.

First, what does this do for tuition. Recall that tuition went up 7.8% or about \$200 per student per year. The bill provides a \$3000 tax deduction, but the DoR reports that while the Maximum savings is \$230, the Average savings is only \$86. So, essentially the legislature has taken \$200 from every UW system student, but returned only \$86. While it is nice to get some money back, why bother paying to collect it in the first place, if we are going to give it back. Which brings up the second point.

Second, what does this do for access. \$200 does not seem like a lot, but when you add book prices going up, rental rates going up, etc., etc., it becomes a barrier to those who cannot afford to keep up. An \$86 dollar tax credit paid after a year's worth of tuition does not reduce the barrier to entry, especially when it is not a refundable tax credit, but a deduction as is the case here. The key to the deduction is that you have to have income before it does you any good at all, so those families (and independent students) with the greatest income barriers to higher education will be those whom the tax deduction helps the least.

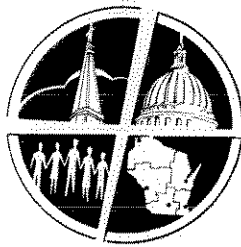
Finally, on a technical note I also observe that DoR estimates that the cost to administer all the education tax deductions is \$300,000. Pro-rated, this is about \$60,000 which incidentally about what my law degree will cost me. But, we already pay for people to administer financial aid and tuition, so we could save more money there as well.

I want to stress (1) I believe that it is important to support funding for higher education. (2) The \$18.6 million here is a good place to start. But, (3) the plan in this bill is not well

targeted to further Wisconsin's tradition in higher education of helping those who need the help the most attend college. I urge the committee to review reducing tuition and providing additional financial aid as appropriate ways to utilize the budget surplus, and if possible to find additional support for higher education in Wisconsin, to further eliminate the barriers to higher education in Wisconsin.

Thank you.

John P. Morgan
1301 Spring St. #409
Madison, WI 53715



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

30 WEST MIFFLIN STREET • MADISON, WISCONSIN 53703 • 608/257-0004 • FAX 608/257-0376
E-MAIL: wconferenc@aol.com • WEBSITE: <http://www.wisconsinccatholic.com>

TO: Members Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: John Hebscher

DATE: March 5, 1998

RE: Tax Credit/Deductions for Education Expenses

On behalf of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, I urge you to support those provisions in the budget adjustment bill that create tax credits and deductions for expenses for elementary and secondary education.

One of the central tenets of Catholic social teaching is the belief that society must exercise a "preferential option for the poor." This means nothing more than that, in situations where we cannot do everything, we should make helping the most needy our highest priority. Policies which target tax relief to low income persons and their families are consistent with this value.

The Governor's proposal does this and we applaud him for it. Nearly \$70 million of the \$100 million in tax relief in this proposal is directed to working families, especially the working poor. This tax credit is "refundable" which makes it especially helpful for those who earn the least.

We are also very pleased that the plan includes tax relief for parents who choose religious schools. Many of the arguments for and against this are not new. We have addressed those issues before so I won't repeat myself. Rather, I invite you to consider a different - and compelling - reason to keep religious schools part of this proposal.

That reason is welfare reform.

Both state and federal government policies regarding public assistance for the poor now demand much more of low income parents, the very parents who most benefit from a refundable credit for tuition or other expenses. More than in recent times, these parents must find a way to juggle the demands of managing a home, arranging for child care, and getting their children to school and themselves to a job. The consequences of failing to do so are greater in a world without "welfare as we knew it."

Given this reality, educational policies and options must be more "family friendly" than ever before. For many families, a religious school may be that family friendly option. Such schools may be located closest to the family home, the child care provider, the work site, or the relative who will care for the child after school. Such schools may do more to help the parent inculcate the values and ideals the parent would teach if they did not have to work. Such schools may be better linked to others in the neighborhood who can help them manage their transition to greater self sufficiency.

In light of all this, justice demands that we make the choice of such schools as easy as possible for the poor and working poor facing the new burdens and responsibilities of W-2 and related policy changes.

As you may recall, the Catholic Conference has not been shy about disagreeing with the Governor on welfare reform. But the Governor, to his credit, has consistently embraced the idea of redefining relationships between government and other institutions and structures in the community. He has recognized that such a change can empower the poor to benefit from all of the "social capital" of their neighborhoods -- including church sponsored schools.

This tax credit/deduction plan is consistent with that theme. It empowers those who need empowerment most. It gives parents more support in arranging for the education of their children and in so doing helps them cope with the responsibility to find and hold a job. It deserves the support of all who want to maximize the chances for working families to climb the ladder of self sufficiency.



SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ALLIANCE

4797 Hayes Road
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Madison, WI 53704
(608) 242-1370
FAX (608) 242-1290

James M. Lynch
Director of
Government Relations

Testimony Before the Joint Finance Committee
on K-12 Education Provisions in AB 768/SB 436
March 5, 1998

An Alliance of:

Association of
Wisconsin School
Administrators
Tim Laatsch
Executive Director

Wisconsin Association
of School District
Administrators
Miles Turner
Executive Director

Wisconsin Association
of School Business
Officials
Don Mrdjenovich
Executive Director

Wisconsin Council for
Administrators of
Special Services
Chuck Hastert
President

By

David Branback, SAA
Director of Business Services, West Allis-West Milwaukee School District

On behalf of the School Administrator's Alliance, I would like to address several provisions contained in the Budget Adjustment Bill which impact upon K-12 education.

Delayed School Aid Payments

The SAA opposes the provision in AB 768/SB 436 that would cap the property tax relief fund at \$111 million.

The SAA strongly supports this fund that was established in 1997 Act 27, that dedicates surplus revenues to funding previously unfunded employee compensation increases and to avoid \$175 million in delayed school aid payments. This fund will promote sound budgeting practices at the state level and avoid unnecessary costs to local school districts. The Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates, for example, that the \$75 million delay in FY 97-98 would reduce school district interest earnings by \$1.7 million.

Performance and Payment Bonds

The SAA supports allowing the State and local units of government to waive the requirement to purchase performance and payment bonds for projects of \$50,000 or more. Allowing state and local units of government waive bonding requirements allows these units of government to ensure payment and performance in the most efficient and effective ways.

Social Promotion

The SAA opposes the provisions in AB 768/SB 436 that would mandate that students score at the "basic" levels of performance on the statewide 4th and 8th grade examination to advance to grades 5 and 9. While the intent of this provision is laudatory, research on grade retention demonstrates that policies such as that proposed actually have negative effects on achievement, dropout rates, and school order. In addition, such policies sap resources that could be used for more effective remedies for students that are not performing to standard.

David Branback Testimony Before Joint Finance Committee

March 5, 1998

Page 2

National Teacher Certification and Peer Review

The SAA supports the provisions in AB 768/SB 436 that are aimed at promoting teachers on-going professional development and mentoring for new teachers. These provisions can help our outstanding teachers continuously grow professionally.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. If you would like any additional information regarding the SAA's positions on these or other issues related to K-12 education, please contact Jim Lynch, Director of Government Relations, at (608) 242-1370.

Governor Thompson's Family Education Tax Cuts K-12 Education Tax Credit and Deduction -- Proposed Eligibility

Eligible

Expenses

- Non-religious tutoring by a licensed teacher in grade or age appropriate curricula that supplements curricula and instruction available during regular school year
- The following costs are eligible as they relate to a pupil's attendance at an eligible institution:
 - Transportation costs paid to others
 - Non-religious instructional materials
 - Education-related school supplies
 - Required school uniforms
- Home computer hardware and educational software (up to \$500 per year) per claimant

Fees

- Education-related fees such as lab equipment, computer time, etc.
- Fees for special needs classes or after-school enrichment studies
- Fees for summer school and summer camps that are primarily academic in focus
- Rental fees for musical instruments
- Fees for drivers education course if part of the school curricula
- Tuition for college courses that satisfy high school graduate requirements
- Fees paid to an eligible institution for extracurricular sports, music, speech, drama and other activities

Ineligible

Expenses

- Sports-related training unrelated to school
- Expenses for out-of-state class trips and student exchange programs
- Transportation costs incurred to transport child to tutoring, camps, etc., which are not held at an eligible institution
- Religious instructional materials
- Purchase of musical instruments
- Any expenses incurred after the student is no longer enrolled at the school
- Purchase of materials and equipment for extracurricular sports, speech or drama events
- School tuition
- Religious tutoring
- Costs of connecting to the Internet
- School lunches

The ABCs of Governor Thompson's Family Education Tax Cuts



A. The program

K-12 refundable income tax credit

Credit of up to \$1,000 for each child attending a K-12 school for education-related expenses. Maximum credit per family is \$2,000. Eligible families include joint filers earning \$30,000 or less annually with one child. Income eligibility rises by \$5,000 for each additional child, up to a maximum of \$60,000. Single filers earning \$25,000 or less with one child are eligible. Maximum income for single filers rises by \$5,000 for each additional child, up to a maximum of \$55,000.

K-12 tax deduction

A deduction from Wisconsin adjusted gross income of up to \$1,500 per child attending any K-12 school for education-related expenses. Can be claimed with the education tax credit. Joint filers earning up to \$100,000 annually qualify for the deduction. Single filers earning up to \$60,000 annually are eligible.

Higher education tax deduction

Deduction from Wisconsin adjusted gross income of up to \$3,000 per student for tuition costs. Students of all ages qualify. Joint filers earning up to \$100,000 annually qualify. Deduction begins to phase out at \$80,000 and ends at \$100,000 of income. Single filers earning up to \$60,000 annually qualify. For them, deduction begins to phase out at \$50,000 and ends at \$60,000.



B. The eligible expenses

- Computers and computer software (up to \$500 per year).
- School supplies, such as notebooks, pens, pencils and calculators.
- Education-related fees, such as lab equipment and computer time.
- Transportation costs paid to others related to school attendance, such as bus rides.
- Special needs classes.
- In-state school trips.
- School uniforms.
- After-school enrichment studies.
- Summer schools and camps that are primarily academic in nature.
- Musical instrument rental fees.
- Extracurricular fees for sports, music, speech, drama and other activities.
- Drivers education courses.
- Tuition for college courses that satisfy high school graduation requirements.
- Tutoring (non-religious) by a licensed teacher.



C. The bottom line

Family #1:	Qualifies for higher education & K-12 deductions
Parents: 2	
Children: 2	
Earnings: \$50,000	
- Higher Education Deduction for child at UW Tuition at UW:	\$2,861
- K-12 Deduction for child in middle school Computer purchases:	\$500
Education expenses:	\$1,000
Total tax deduction:	\$4,361
	Tax Cut = \$358

Family #2:	Qualifies for K-12 education credit & deduction
Parents: 2	
Children: 3	
Earnings: \$40,000	
- K-12 credit (max. \$1,000/child & \$2,000/family) Child 1 expenses:	\$1,000
Child 2 expenses:	\$1,000
Total credit benefit:	\$2,000
- K-12 deduction (max. \$1,500/child) Child 3 expenses:	\$1,500
Total deduction benefit:	\$123
	Tax Cut = \$2,123

Family Education Tax Cuts will help make learning lifelong

By Edward Chin

The broad acclaim of the higher education community for Gov. Tommy Thompson's Family Education Tax Cuts plan, in part, results from the positive vision of the crucial role education plays in the lives of Wisconsin citizens. The proposal recognizes that learning must be a continuous theme, not a phase, in each individual's life.

The bill to be sent to the Legislature for its review and approval contains strong tax reduction support for families with children in the K-12 systems; assistance for traditional undergraduates at technical colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and for adults who require additional education and training, whether to upgrade current work skills or pursue a new career path. The Family Education Tax Cuts proposal will help low- and middle-income households better afford the education that Wisconsin's children and adults need to get ahead and stay ahead.

With specific reference to the post-secondary component, a deduction of up to \$3,000 of taxable income will greatly help reduce the costs of education at Wis-

Chin is state director of the Wisconsin Technical College System.

GUEST COLUMN

consin institutions of higher education or at Minnesota reciprocity institutions. At the technical colleges, our traditional younger students enrolled full-time will clearly benefit by having their educational costs partially offset by the program.

In addition, many of our students are adults returning for further training. A technical college family might benefit from the tax cuts for their children in the K-12 system, for one parent in an associate degree training program, and perhaps for the other parent taking a single course to upgrade capabilities in a particular occupational skill.

The beauty of the Family Education Tax Cuts is that Wisconsin will be giving credit to families and individuals for making the right education decisions at any point in life. Lifelong learning is a concept that is becoming widely endorsed by our society. However, finding the resources with which to pursue further learning is often a formidable challenge for families and individuals.

By helping to make education at any level more affordable, the governor's proposal represents an important step toward turning a laudable concept into reality.

More mail: Photos, W-2

Schreiner's photos make hearts sing

I am coining the phrase 'lyric photography' to refer to the work of Craig Schreiner.

The entire State Journal photography staff is good and deserves a group citation.

— Angela Paratore, Madison

Is W-2 a success? Depends on definition

There are many people asking whether or not W-2 is a success, but I would like to ask exactly how success is defined in this context. Is W-2 a success if everybody from Aid to Families with Dependent Children continues to receive government

money in the name of a new program, or if taxpayers no longer have to bear the burden of supporting the indigent who won't work for themselves?

The families described in a recent article all seemed to be unwed mothers of six children without high school diplomas, and it is hard for me to have sympathy for them. Am I to blame for their mistakes? Is it my responsibility to work faithfully to pay my taxes to support them?

People on welfare are not unfairly maligned and downtrodden through malicious intent by the rest of society. They are people who made mistakes and wish others to pay the price through higher taxes. I resent being unfairly taxed to support them.

— John Zimm, Madison

Celebrating 29 Years of Advocacy and Service 1969-1998

CAPITOL REPORT

The Newsletter of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference

February 1998



Governor Calls for \$100 Million in Education Tax Breaks for All Kids

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference is urging Catholic school parents and boosters to support Gov. Tommy Thompson's proposal to spend \$100 million of a projected \$300 million state surplus on a new program that would give taxpayers credits and deductions for educational expenses for public and private school students in kindergarten through college.

The kindergarten through 12th grade tax credit is a refundable credit of up to \$1,000 per child or \$2,000 per family. It is available to joint tax filers making \$30,000 or less with one child and single filers making \$25,000 or less with one child. The maximum income rises by \$5,000 for each additional child up to a maximum of seven children.

The K-12 tax deduction permits a reduction of up to \$1,500 per student from a filer's adjusted gross income. The deduction begins to phase out for joint filers at \$80,000 and ends at \$100,000. For single filers, the phase out range is \$50,000 to \$60,000.

Unfortunately, tuition is not an allowable expense for the K-12 credit/deduction. The most relevant allowable expense for nonpublic school students is fees for non-religious instructional materials, education related school supplies, and school uniforms.

Examples of eligible fees include school registration, enrollment fees, lab fees, activity fees, computer time, text books, band and music instruction, art, recess/

playground fees and library fees.

In addition, parents will be able to claim expenses for home computers and computer software; school supplies such as notebooks, pens, pencils and calculators; in-state school trips; after-school enrichment studies; summer schools and camps that are primarily academic; musical instrument rentals; extracurricular fees for sports, music, speech, drama, and other activities; driver education courses; tuition for college courses that satisfy high school graduation requirements; and non-religious tutoring by a state licensed teacher.

The tax credit/deduction is modeled after a similar program that was passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 1997. Initially, the Minnesota plan included tuition but that was eliminated in the eleventh hour, according to the Minnesota Catholic Conference.

The higher education tax deduction permits a reduction of up to \$3,000 per student. It includes tuition. It is available

to all students, regardless of age, who attend part-time or full-time Wisconsin college, university or technical school. Deductions phase out for filers at \$80,000 annual income and ends at \$1,000 income.

The Legislature has until April 30 to pass the measure, which is contained in the state's "budget adjustment bill."

Contact your state Assembly representative and state Senator and let them know what you think of the proposal. If you don't know who your Assembly representative or your state Senator is, contact your county election board or local municipal office.

Address mail to your state Senator at P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707. Address mail to Assembly representatives with last names beginning with the letters A through L to P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53708. For those with last names beginning with M through Z, mail to P.O. Box 8953, Madison, WI 53708.

WCC: Legal Immigrants Need Food Stamps

State lawmakers should support a proposal to provide food stamp benefits to about 7,200 legal immigrants who lost their access to the program under the 1996 federal welfare reform law, says WCC Executive Director John Huebscher.

In written testimony to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, Huebscher linked the WCC's support for the proposal to the bishops' 1995 statement on welfare reform.

"The WCC has exhorted the public and policy makers alike to see the face of each poor

Continued on page 4

In This Issue

- 2 Legislative Update
- 3 Learning Innovations Center
- 4 MBA degree on-line at UW-Whitewater
- 5 Competency-based Admissions
- 6 College Costs Commission
- 8 Sesquicentennial Update

To the Point

"The Learning Innovations Center will help us bridge the gap between what the UW System has been and what it must become to remain competitive and meet the changing educational needs of our students and the state."

—Katharine C. Lyall
UW System President
(see column page 3)

Frazier and Pletcher were members of a statewide committee that, in 1997, created a strategic plan for UW System libraries.

The report describes the transition that is taking place in UW libraries from a traditional to a virtual library, and stresses the need for balance between both types. "It also discusses the need for new funding resources to support technology and expanded access to information in both print and electronic formats," Frazier said.

Frazier outlined aggressive steps that UW libraries have taken to leverage budget resources to maximize information access across the UW System. Systemwide licensing, for instance, has reduced the per-student

a "...fundamental equity of information access for all UW System students."

UW System libraries provide invaluable access to a variety of information sources for a growing and increasingly diverse group of customers. Each year, UW System libraries are called upon to serve not only students and faculty, but thousands of Wisconsin citizens, businesses, educators, high school students and local government employees. Over 13,000 non-UW patrons borrow materials from UW libraries each year. And the number is growing.

According to Frazier and Pletcher, the emergence of electronic databases has significantly increased use of UW System libraries:

672,000 in 1994-95.

- * User searches of the UW-Platteville library's on-line catalog and databases increased by 92 percent from the late 1980s to 1994-95, with an additional 69 percent increase in searches coming from other UW System libraries.

- * At UW-Whitewater, the on-line library catalog plus associated electronic indexes were searched more than 670,000 times in 1994-95.

- * On-line database searches at UW-Milwaukee rose from 62,000 in 1992-93 to more than 170,000 in 1994-95, an increase of 176 percent in just two years.

See *Libraries* — page 5

Governor's Speech Focuses on State of Education

By Peter Fox

Gov. Tommy G. Thompson put education — both K-12 and higher education — in the spotlight as he presented his "State of the State" address to the Legislature on Jan. 20.

The governor, in his twelfth such address, clearly made education a cornerstone of his plan for state government as Wisconsin turns the corner into a new century.

UW System President Katharine C. Lyall applauded the governor's actions in focusing public attention on the spectrum of education from kindergarten through the university, and on the financial needs of low- and moderate-income college students.

"I know Gov. Thompson to be a true supporter of the concept voiced by his Blue-Ribbon Commission on 21st Century Jobs, that 'innovative learning opportunities should be available to all Wisconsin citizens in a seamless manner throughout their lives, delivered wherever they may be,'" Lyall said. "His emphasis on education in the State of the State address is evidence of his

dedication to that principle."

While peppering his speech with historical references to Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial celebration of 1998, Thompson referred to a future for the state "inspired by youth." Four young people made short preambles to portions of his speech touching on the economy, education, the environment and health care.

The spirit of the Wisconsin Idea was evidenced in the address as the Governor drew on the work of three university faculty for new ideas to resolve state problems — Engineering Professor Anders Andrew was designated to head a panel of scientists to review whether the proposed Crandon mine

harm. Professor Don Kettl was recognized for chairing the panel on Campaign Finance Reform whose recommendations the Governor urged be adopted promptly. And President Lyall was recognized for chairing the Blue Ribbon Commission on 21st Century Jobs which recommended eliminating taxation of business computers —

the tools of 21st Century innovation in Wisconsin.

References to education were woven throughout the governor's speech, which was carried live by Wisconsin Public Radio and videotaped for delayed broadcast by Wisconsin Public Television.

"The greatest challenge before our state tonight," Thompson said, "is to make sure every child in this state — whether rich or poor, suburban or urban — receives the best education in the world."

The foundation of Thompson's education proposals is his "Family Education Package" which would provide \$100 million of tax credits and deductions for educational expenses from kindergarten through college.

"Families would be eligible for up to a \$1,500 tax break per child in kindergarten through 12th grade" for educational expenses which could include tutors, home computers or summer camps, Thompson said. "Low-income families would get a

See *State of Education* — page 8

Oshkosh
Northwestern
pg. A8
Date 2/15/98

Tuition deduction good for families

By KATHARINE C. LYALL

Finding ways to keep college affordable is a rigorous pursuit — in no way lacking the effort that drives every other aspect of the UW System's mission of instruction, research and public service. I'm proud of the progress the UW System has made, through the decade, to maintain high access to quality programs at an affordable price.

UW tuition consistently ranks among the most affordable in comparisons with peer institutions — even as our campuses and educational programs have been at the cutting edge of innovation, access and quality. Looking to the future, I am encouraged by recent action at the state level that will help the UW System remain an affordable choice for Wisconsin's working families. This proposal follows action by the Legislature and governor to increase financial aid for the state's neediest students by \$5.1 million over the next two years.

In his State-of-the-State address, Gov. Tommy Thompson proposed a plan to reduce college expenses, based on a tax deduction of up to \$3,000 per student for tuition costs. If enacted by the state Legislature, the resulting tax cut would help thousands of Wisconsin families.

Under the governor's proposal, a deduction from a family's adjusted gross income of up to \$3,000 per student is allowed for tuition at any UW System institution, private college, technical college, or Minnesota reciprocity school. Joint filers earning up to \$100,000 annually qualify. The deduction is phased out beginning at

"Looking to the future, I am encouraged by recent action at the state level that will help the UW system remain an affordable choice for Wisconsin's working families."

Katharine Lyall,
president, UW System



port by the Legislature because, like so many pieces to a puzzle, it is yet another important option for Wisconsin families determined to make for their sons and daughters an investment that pays a life-

time of dividends.

Just last year, the first-ever analysis of the economic impact of the entire UW System on Wisconsin documented that over a career a UW bachelor's graduate, on average, will earn significantly more than a person with no education beyond high school — \$517,000 to be exact. Up front, however, the cost of college can loom as a significant financial challenge.

For many families, the dollars saved under the governor's proposal will help meet future increases in tuition and ensure educational quality and opportunity. By helping defray the cost of a college education, this is a proposal that every working family in Wisconsin can — and should — support.

The plan will be considered by the state Legislature in the coming weeks. I encourage Wisconsin families to contact their local legislators to urge support of the "Tuition Deduction for Higher Education." It will help families provide for a child's college education — one of the largest expenditures many families will ever make.

KATHARINE C. LYALL is president of the University of Wisconsin System.

\$80,000 and ends at \$100,000 of income. Single filers earning up to \$60,000 annually also qualify. For them, the deduction begins to phase out at \$50,000 and ends at \$60,000.

Here are three examples of how the program would benefit Wisconsin families:

► A single-parent mother earning \$20,000 would receive \$2,000 in tuition assistance (Pell Grant), leaving \$861 in remaining tuition costs. Based upon her adjusted gross income, she would be eligible for a \$68 tax cut under the proposal. For that single-parent mom, and many others like her, the extra \$68 is a welcome break.

► A four-member family with \$60,000 in adjusted gross income, with two children attending UW campuses as undergraduates, would receive a tax cut of \$393 — providing the students did not receive any grants, awards or scholarships and were claimed by their parents as dependents.

► A three-member family with \$75,000 in adjusted gross income, with one child attending a UW system campus full time, would receive a tax cut of \$197.

The governor's plan is worthy of sup-

Wisconsin
State Journal
2.22.98
pg. 2B

Higher education deserves support from tax credit

By Rolf Wegenke

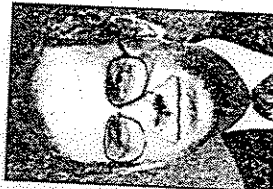
I have always subscribed to the theory behind the British phrase that one "takes" a degree, as opposed to the more common American phrase that one "receives" a degree. No one can give you an education. Teaching and learning are a collaborative process between the professor and the student.

Education is also a collaborative process among the colleges and universities, the government, students, and their families. Wisconsin's private, or independent, colleges and universities, by their emphasis on the individual learner and on cross-disciplinary studies and critical thinking skills, are fully engaged in this collaboration. Their small class size (just 17 students, on average) and more than

GUEST COLUMN

150 years of emphasis on a rigorous curriculum demonstrate the depth of this effort.

There also needs to be a collaboration on the financing of education — one which involves the college or university, the government, and students and their families. Wisconsin's private colleges and universities receive no subsidies from the state. However, 80 percent of all students attending an independent institution of higher learning in Wisconsin receive financial aid.



Wegenke

Wegenke is president of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

More than 70 percent of the grant aid is from the colleges and universities themselves and from other private sources. The remainder comes equally from state and federal student aid programs. Clearly, the independent sector is doing its part. A national study completed a few years back showed that all 10 of the top 10 providers of student aid in Wisconsin were private colleges and universities.

The government's role is highly significant. Government funds are targeted to the poorest of the poor. This student aid stands as an opportunity for advancement — a doorway to a better life for individuals and a stronger economy for the state.

Then comes the student and, in many cases, his or her family. They, too, are joined in partnership to finance educational opportunity. Gov. Tommy Thompson has proposed a \$3,000 tax deduction for college and university tuition. This

is truly help for those who help themselves; help for those who "fall through the cracks"; for most government student aid programs; help for those who scrimp and save.

The governor's proposals not only help college students and their families, they help those involved in elementary and secondary education as well.

More than this, they help every single citizen in Wisconsin. Wisconsin is already in transition to the information age. Studies show that the fastest-growing occupations in the next century will require a college degree. Many Wisconsin employers cannot find the educated employees they need. If we don't invest in education now, our economy will not support the quality of life that makes Wisconsin special. And, if we don't support the state government's helping those who help themselves, we run the risk of having government bear all the costs down the road.

Thompson proposes solid initiatives

Ashland
Daily Press
pg. A4
Date 1/23/98

When the economy is robust and the state is looking at a \$300 million surplus, its easier to be generous.

In Tuesday's State of the State address, Republican Governor Tommy Thompson proposed numerous initiatives — many of which should get strong bipartisan support.

The most significant proposal was a \$100 million tax package providing tax breaks of up to \$1,500 per child for families with children in grades K-12 and a \$3,000 per child tax deduction for any child attending a Wisconsin university or technical school or a reciprocity school in Minnesota.

**State of State
initiatives
both fiscally
responsible and
compassionate**

Although Senate Majority leader Chuck Chvala, D-Madison, grouched such a proposal wouldn't benefit anyone under 25 or over 50, that fact is families with

school-age children are often those with the largest expenses and largest tax burden.

The K-12 tax credit goes a long way toward the purchase of clothes, books, and household goods — or saving for college. Likewise, the college and technical school tuition credit will guarantee a strong, well-trained work force, and ensure that any student who wants an education past high school can get it, regardless of their families' income.

Thompson also proposes adding \$10 million to the Community Options Program budget, a wonderful cost-effective program that allows seniors and the disabled to receive at-home health care, rather than move to nursing homes. Both Ashland and Bayfield counties consistently have waiting lists for COP programs, and hopefully a boost in funding will help eliminate those lists.

Still another initiative would combine the state's long-term care programs into one program called FamilyCare. While there were few details on how this program would work, Thompson said it would serve approximately 1 million families, offering "one-stop shopping" when families needed help caring for the disabled and chronically ill.

In addition, he proposes a trial program that would guarantee the disabled Medicare and Medicaid coverage regardless of income.

Another proposal that could benefit northern Wisconsin is the addition of \$1.5 million to the state's tourism marketing budget. Wisconsin has recently fallen behind neighboring states in marketing efforts, and this will help remedy that inequity. Because northern Wisconsin is a key tourism destination point, we stand to benefit from that boost.

In the education arena, Thompson proposed a requirement for schools to set standards for fourth- and eighth-graders. If students do not meet those locally-established standards, they would not be promoted to the next grade. He also proposed the state pay for teachers to take a national certification test and give teachers a \$3,000 bonus if they pass the test.

How these programs are set up and administered will ultimately determine their effectiveness. But these are proposals that show both fiscal responsibility and human compassion, and that's what we expect from good government.

Tax breaks aimed at parents, students

Help with expenses
for public, private
schools and colleges

By Jeff Mayers

State government reporter

Hitting re-election year themes, Gov. Tommy Thompson used his State of the State speech Tuesday night to call for \$180 million in tax cuts, higher teacher standards and a sweeping "family care" initiative.

The Republican governor, preparing to seek a fourth term this November against Democrat Ed Garvey, also boosted two popular

FOCUS: STATE OF THE STATE

upcoming events: the Super Bowl and the state's 150th birthday party.

"The Packers are America's team. And we are America's state," Thompson told lawmakers, cabinet officers, state Supreme Court justices and guests in a packed Assembly chamber at the Capitol after a satellite link-up with Packers defenseman Eugene Robinson.

"This is our sesquicentennial. ... let us celebrate together."

They did, singing "Happy Birthday" to the state, after a pitch pipe cue from first lady Sue Ann

Thompson.

Garvey, a Madison labor lawyer, sang a different tune, however. He portrayed Thompson as a buddy of big business and as an enemy of the public school teacher and property taxpayer.

"We need the governor to bring people together," Garvey said in the official Democratic response. "We have had a side show in education."

In his dozen years in office, Thompson has used this speech to set his agenda. Polls show educa-



State Journal photo/SARAH B. TEWS

Gov. Tommy Thompson shakes hands with legislators Tuesday as he enters the state Assembly chambers before his annual State of the State address. Thompson hit key campaign themes in his speech, including tax cuts, higher teacher standards and "family care."

Wisconsin
State Journal
1/21/98
pg. 1A

\$100 million in tax breaks earmarked for education

Governor also wants to use surplus to replace funds from computer levy

BY AMY RINARD
of the Journal Sentinel staff

Madison — In a wide-ranging list of promises likely to form the basis of his re-election campaign, Gov. Tommy Thompson vowed Tuesday to provide Wisconsin families and businesses with \$180 million in tax breaks, boost an already strong state economy and make sure the

lights never go out because of a lack of electricity.

In his annual State of the State address, which in this election year also sets forth Thompson's political agenda, the governor proposed ending the tax paid by businesses on computer equipment to "stop taxing the jobs of the future."

When it was proposed during debate on the last state budget, that plan was strongly opposed by municipal officials, including Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, who argued it would shift a greater tax burden on homeowners.

But in proposing to end the tax, Thompson was quick to vow that he would do it without shifting the tax burden to residents. He said he would use \$64 million of a state surplus the Thompson administration now estimates at \$342 million to reimburse municipalities for the lost revenue in 2000.

Thompson also proposed a family education tax package that would give parents \$100 million in tax breaks to spend on their children's educational expenses.

Additional tax cuts of about \$16 million would come with the

state's adoption of federal income tax code changes already approved by Congress for 1998, changes that Thompson also recommended.

Addressing the reliability of the state's supply of electricity, which became an issue last summer when there were shortages, Thompson recommended eliminating "cumbersome and outdated reporting requirements on utilities, streamlining the approval process for new transmission lines and encouraging construction of new generating plants."

"Nothing is ever going to turn

the lights out on Wisconsin," he said.

Among Thompson's other proposals were plans to:

- Spend an additional \$15 million for tourism promotion.
- Set up a council of scientists to review the proposed Crandon mine to determine whether it can be operated without harming the environment.

- Start a statewide program to ensure the health and safety of children and improve the quality of care in certified family day-care homes that are reimbursed under the W-2 welfare program.

- Help Ashland and Marinette counties cope with paper industry consolidations by making them each eligible for up to \$750,000 in state tax credits as an incentive for new and expanding businesses.

- Send a Golden Book to every newborn in the state to encourage parents to start reading to their children.

- Hold a conference on women's health in Milwaukee on April 14 to address issues of women's health.

- Double by 2002 state agricultural exports, which in 1997 totaled a record \$2 billion.